

L'Aquila Food Security Initiative Meeting

Washington, DC

2-3 February 2012

Chair's Summary

1. The L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) group met in Washington, DC February 2-3, 2012. The discussion covered progress on the AFSI financial pledges and accountability reporting, strengthening investment in research, science and technology, managing for development results, and the future of AFSI. Representatives of partner countries and civil society were invited to share their views with the group. This summary reflects the discussions as understood by the Chair.

Progress Toward Meeting AFSI Financial Pledges

2. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) presented a report on AFSI donor governments' progress toward meeting the L'Aquila financial commitments. Based on the latest information received from donor governments, the OECD reported good progress toward meeting the commitments, although disbursements are lagging in some cases.

3. AFSI donor governments were encouraged to provide updated information on both commitments and disbursements to be used for the Chicago G8 accountability report. Reporting on disbursements is desirable, although it was recognized that countries use different means for delivering assistance that affect the availability of disbursement data.

4. It was emphasized that the L'Aquila financial pledges do not represent a complete picture of support for food security. Many countries provide financial assistance that is not captured in the AFSI reporting framework. In addition, as has been previously discussed within the AFSI group, non-financial commitments are an important element of AFSI.

Perspectives of Civil Society Organizations

5. AFSI recognizes that 'increased involvement of civil society ... is a key factor to success.' In that spirit, representatives of civil society were invited to review AFSI progress, share experiences in overseeing the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) and in mobilizing multi-sector action on nutrition.

6. The civil society representatives emphasized the importance of accounting for results, not just inputs. They also discussed the need for improvements in accountability, including the

development of accountability measures that track the Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security. More investment is needed in capacity building in partner countries to support accountability efforts.

7. A presentation on civil society's role in the operation of the GAFSP revealed some interesting lessons learned on the application of aid effectiveness principles. The participation of civil society in funding decisions and in connecting local CSO's and farmer organizations to implementing entities at the country level have been positive innovations that contribute to effective development outcomes.

8. The discussion on mobilizing multi-stakeholder action on nutrition highlighted the importance of early nutrition interventions to food security and economic growth. AFSI members welcomed the increased attention to integrating nutrition into agriculture and food security.

Delivering on the L'Aquila Call to Strengthen Investment in Research, Science and Technology

9. The AFSI group discussed how to develop an effective means of tracking spending on agricultural research, extension and education. Tracking investments is important for accountability, for determining gaps in research, and for assessing effectiveness.

10. Presentations reviewed the work of the Agricultural Science and Technology Initiative (ASTI) and other efforts to track research investments. None of these efforts individually provides a complete picture of investments in research, education and extension.

11. Three options were considered for advancing AFSI's work on tracking investments in research, education and extension. The first option is to improve reporting to the OECD-DAC. The second is to encourage support to ASTI and the CGIAR. The third is to link the OECD and ASTI data. All three are necessary to provide comprehensive accountability. AFSI members expressed strong support for improving tracking of investments in research, extension and education by donors, partner countries, foundations and the private sector.

12. It was agreed to form a working group under the leadership of the United States to consider both short and long term efforts. The immediate objective is to produce an input for the Chicago G8 accountability report.

Perspective of AFSI Partner Countries

13. A presentation on the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) highlighted the important contribution of the CAADP process to developing a credible model for design, implementation and partnership. It has demonstrated the feasibility and desirability of country leadership and resulted in the alignment of development organizations behind country investment plans.

Using Managing for Development Results (MfDR) to Demonstrate Progress Toward AFSI Commitments

14. At its meeting in December 2010 the AFSI group established an ad-hoc working group on Managing for Development Results chaired by Germany. The working group was tasked with examining how to improve AFSI's ability to report on results.

15. During the discussion of the experiences of AFSI participants with MfDR, attention was drawn to the importance of strengthening statistical capacity in order to improve results reporting and evaluation capabilities, with due regard for past experiences in this area. There was also general support for further work on impact evaluations, including moving over time to joint impact evaluations.

16. The working group, in conjunction with IFPRI, organized a workshop on MfDR in Washington on February 1, 2012. The workshop developed a proposal for a report to be prepared with substantial support from IFPRI. The proposal was presented to the AFSI group for review and approval. The proposed report would use four case studies to demonstrate that the AFSI Group provides financial and non-financial inputs, that the inputs are managed properly so they are used in the most effective way, and that these inputs lead to results on the ground. Ghana and Senegal have agreed to participate in the case studies; two additional countries, including one outside of Africa, will be identified.

17. The AFSI group supported the preparation of the report, with IFPRI's participation, by the end of 2012. It is expected that early results from the report will be available by mid-March for circulation to the AFSI group. By early April this early-harvest report will be finalized for inclusion as appropriate in the Chicago G8 accountability report. A draft of the full report will be presented to the AFSI group at its fall meeting (date TBC) before it is finalized by the end of the year.

Future of AFSI

18. The AFSI group had a robust discussion of the future of AFSI, noting the continuing need to fulfill leaders' commitment at L'Aquila "to act with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food security." Participants acknowledged that the reporting period for the L'Aquila financial commitments is drawing to a close, though the exact timing varies among countries. It was further acknowledged that nonfinancial commitments are equally if not more important and are considered to be ongoing commitments.

19. The discussion revealed a strong sentiment that the AFSI group should continue its work on tracking financial pledges and fulfilling L'Aquila nonfinancial commitments. It was recognized that there are issues to be addressed concerning the future of AFSI, including whether focus should be inward or outward. Participation issues also need to be considered. Some signatories of the L'Aquila joint statement have not been active participants in the AFSI group.

The group also recognized the need for greater involvement with the private sector and civil society, but the scope of participation by these groups needs to be considered.

20. The AFSI group agreed to continue discussion of the issues raised at its next meeting.

21. It was agreed that the United States would provide a summary report of the AFSI group's activities to the 38th Session of the Committee on World Food Security in October 2012.

Accountability of Donor Governments

22. The chair presented a draft table to capture data on activities by partner country and multilateral channel and to indicate degree of alignment with nonfinancial commitments made at L'Aquila (equating to the Rome Principles). The discussion of the table reflected the importance donors attach to providing transparency and accountability. Reporting on how the funding committed at L'Aquila is being spent at the country level is a natural progression from the aggregate reporting that donors have provided up until this point.

23. There was general support for using the table to provide data for the Chicago G8 accountability report and for providing the data by April 1. Given the short time frame and the level of effort needed to complete the table, it was agreed that each donor could provide data on a limited number countries, but the number of countries should account for a substantial share of each donor's L'Aquila pledge.. A "catch-all" or "other country programs" line should account for remaining funding committed or disbursed, so that the total reported matches the existing data compiled by the OECD that tracks funding toward L'Aquila pledges. Donor reporting on contributions to multilaterals would not need to provide information on how the multilateral institution disbursed funds, although donors are encouraged to report the country destination of multilateral funding where known. It was considered that it would be useful to make a future request to multilateral institutions to report on AFSI-relevant spending.

Next Meeting

24. The next meeting of the AFSI group will be held in late 2012 in a location to be determined by the Chair.